

## ***Banditry and Its Liquidation***

### ***1920 - 1922***



“... Пусть буржуазия свирепствует, пусть она убивает тысячи рабочих,- победа за нами, победа всемирной коммунистической революции обеспечена.”

“... Let the bourgeoisie rage, let it kill thousands of workers, - Victory is ours, the victory of the world communist revolution is assured.”

## *Banditry and Its Liquidation // 1920 - 1922*

Colored Lithographic print, 64 x 102 cm.      Compilers: A. N. de-Lazari and N. N. Lesevitskii

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## Historical Background and Thematic Design

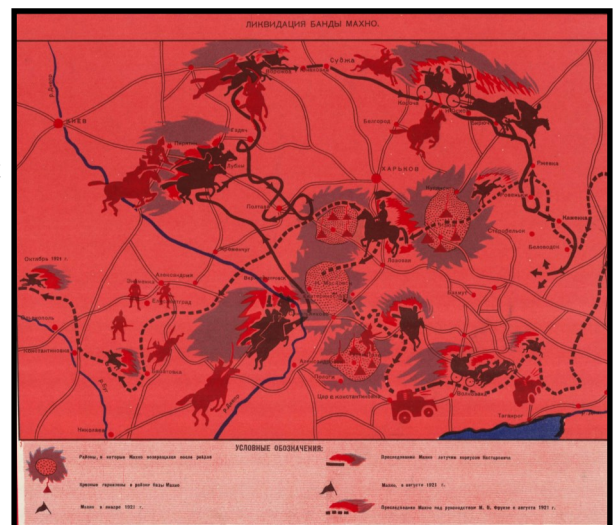
The Russian Civil War did not necessarily end with the defeat of the Whites. Its final stage involved various independent bands of partisans and rebels that took advantage of the chaos enveloping the country and continued to operate in rural areas of Ukraine, Tambov Province, the lower Volga, and western Siberia, where Bolshevik authority was more or less tenuous. Their leaders were by and large experienced military men who stoked peasant hatred for centralized authority, whether it was German occupation forces, Poles, Moscow Bolsheviks, or Jews.

They squared off against the growing power of the communists, which is illustrated as series of five red stars extending over all four sectors. The red circle identifies Moscow as the seat of Soviet power, while the five red stars, enlarging in size but diminishing in color intensity as they move further from Moscow, represent the increasing strength of Communism in Russia during the years 1920-22. The stars also serve as symbolic shields, apparently deterring attacking forces that emanate from Poland, Ukraine, and the Volga region. The red flag with the gold emblem of the hammer-and-sickle in the upper hoist quarter, and the letters P. C. Φ. C. P. (R. S. F. S. R.), identify it as the national flag of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

Those in rebellion were driven by their hatred of Bolshevik agrarian practices concomitant with Lenin's policy of War Communism, which included the collective production of grain, compulsory delivery at fixed prices, forced requisitions, and the Red Terror as instated by the Cheka. Peasants quickly came to resent their role as sources of food for the Soviets, as well as recruitment depots for the Red Army. In contrast, the so-called "Green Movement," operating like pirates, attracted adventurers, criminals, deserters, and freebooters in the thousands, who used anarchism as means to plunder.

While hundreds of bands spread terror in Russia, the brunt of it was borne in Ukraine, where partisan leaders easily appealed to the idea of Ukrainian independence, and also took advantage of the spirit of anarchism in the region. Most of the violence was perpetrated by three groups, namely those headed by Nikifor Grigoriev, who occupied the region of the lower Dnieper; Zelenyi, who controlled the area around Kiev; and Nestor Makhno, who operated on the steppes northeast of the Crimea.

A large inset in the lower right, titled “Liquidation of the bandit Makhno,” focuses on the Red Army’s pursuit in 1920-21 across Ukraine of the most controversial, as well as the most destructive, partisan of the Civil War. Nestor Makhno was born to peasants in Huliaipole in southern Ukraine, became an anarchist communist at eighteen, and spent more than eight years in tsarist prisons. According to a biographer, his prison experiences left him with “an intense hatred of prisons and all authority,” and definitely shaped the course of his political life. He combined an acute sense of justice with excessive cruelty. During the occupation of the Ukraine by the Central Powers in 1918, Makhno claimed in his memoirs to have visited Moscow and met with Sverdlov and Lenin, who may have urged him to fight the Germans in his homeland, where he chose his opponents as

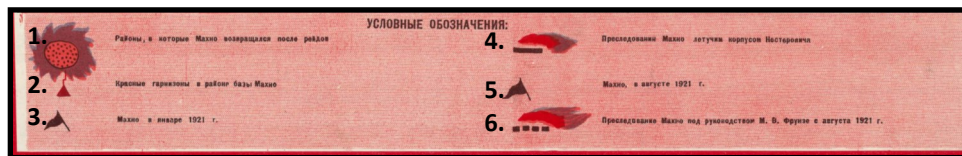




circumstances required. **Figure 24**

The inset presents the viewer with a busy scene of a chase and escape, and illustrates the fruitless efforts undertaken by Red Army forces in pursuit of the elusive Makhno in eastern Ukraine and southern Russia from November 1920 to August 1921. Depicted are soldiers rushing on horseback, including Red Army units and partisans (some in peasant carriages), solid and dotted twisting lines of movement, outbursts of fire and dust, encampments, and even armored car units. The dotted circular areas enveloped in clouds of dust indicate the locations of Makhno's bases of operations, including his headquarters at Huliaipole, while those with red tents indicate their subsequent occupation by Red Army forces. The partisan on horseback bearing a black flag, which was Makhno's anarchist standard, indicates his putative position in January and August 1921. The twisting solid line, accompanied by flames and smoke, indicates the route of the Flying Corps commanded by Vladimir S. Nestorovich, who for twenty-four days chased Makhno, engaging him numerous times and inflicting losses. The twisting dotted line indicates the route of Makhno's pursuit in the spring-summer 1921, which was commanded by Mikhail Frunze, who chased him out of Ukraine at the end of August. On at least two occasions Makhno was forced to flee Red Army forces in peasant carts, in one instance in mid-March losing his entire force and being badly wounded.

### Conventional Symbols



1. *Areas to which Makhno returned after the raid.*
2. *Red garrisons near Makhno's base.*
3. *Makhno in January 1921.*
4. *Pursuit of Makhno by the flying corps of Nesterovich.*
5. *Makhno, in August 1921.*
6. *Pursuit of Makhno under the leadership of M. V. Frunze in August 1921.*

### Western Ukraine and Central Russia

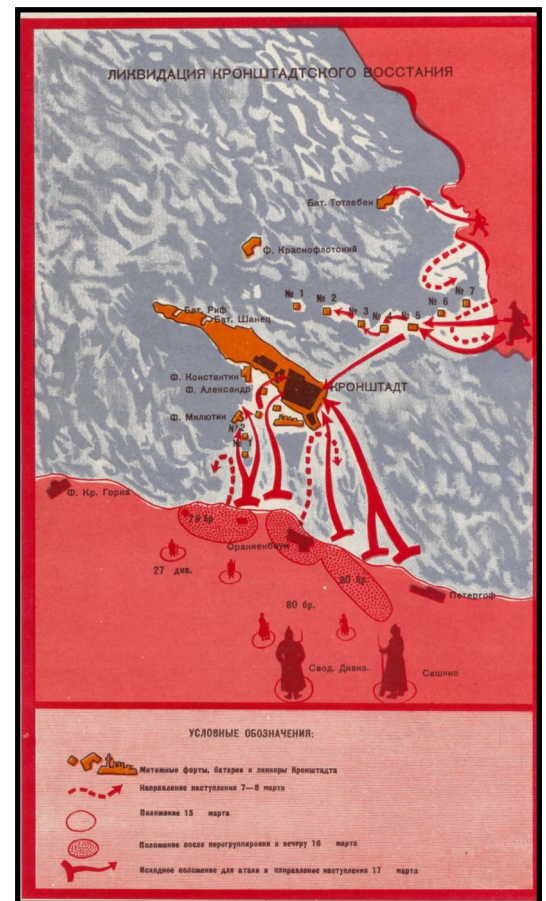
In western Ukraine, particularly the most grievous violence was exacted in the form of pogroms upon Jews, who had been forced to live in the Pale of Settlement, areas taken by Russia during the partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth century. (This area included portions of Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and Lithuania.) Instigators of pogroms included various hosts of Cossacks, White Russian armies, Ukrainian nationalists loyal to Petliura, as well as forces loyal to the Bolsheviks.

The most violent episode of peasant rebellion against Communist rule occurred in 1920-21 in Tambov Province, one of the most prosperous regions of Russian agriculture. It became the target of Bolshevik collection detachments, which ignited a spontaneous insurrection in August 1920. A commander of one of the many rebel detachments in the province, Aleksandr S. Antonov, was elected chief of partisan headquarters in mid-November. His is the figure of the yellow horseman clouded in dust, identified as "Antonov," who is pursued by the figure of a Red Army horseman. Antonov proved to be a master of guerrilla warfare, adopting hit-and-run attacks on collective farms, Bolshevik punitive detachments, commissars, and railroad lines. His methods were comprehensive and brutal; those communists not killed outright were tortured to death. The communists, led by General Antonov-Ovseenko, used heavy-handed and violent methods to liquidate the rebellion by July 1921.

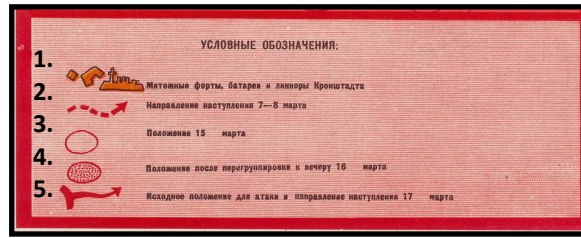
Peasant discontent was also felt in the middle and lower Volga from Samara to Tsaritsyn and lasted from spring 1920 until August 1921. It was led by former Red Army commanders and Communist officials who had become disaffected with Moscow's treatment of the peasantry and was fed continually by deserters from the Red Army. They appear as six figures of yellow horsemen clouded in dust, and identified as "Sapožkov/Sapozhnikov," Gen. Popov," "Vakhulin," "Alexandrov-gaii," and "Piatakov," who are pursued and/or trampled by Red Army horsemen. Another black figure of a horseman, identified as "Maslak/Maslakov," is pursued by Red cavalry near the mouth of the Volga. Notably, the partisan Grigorii Maslakov, another protégé of Makhno, operated in the Don and Kuban regions, and in March 1921 threatened to assault the grain stores in Tsaritsyn before being driven off by Red Army troops.

## Finland Border

Opposition to the revolution was not limited to the countryside, but occurred, in major fashion, near Petrograd at the fortress of Kronstadt on Kotlin Island in the Gulf of Finland. The rebellion is featured in the large inset on the left entitled Ликвидация Кронштадтского Восстания, or "Liquidation of the Kronstadt Uprising." It was engendered by Lenin's policy of War Communism, which led to shortages of food and fuel in Moscow and Petrograd, the latter a seat of strikes and arrests among workers in February 1921. Unrest spread to the fortress at Kronstadt, the principal naval base of the Russian Baltic Fleet. On March 1 Russian sailors, already of an anarchist disposition, issued an anti-Communist resolution voicing dissatisfaction on a variety of issues, and the next day erupted into mutiny, arresting their Bolshevik political commissars. The sailors then established their own Provisional Revolutionary Committee in defiance to the Central Committee in Moscow. Following a series of bombardments and infantry assaults directed by Mikhail Tuchachevsky and Trotsky, the garrison surrendered on March 18. Some two thousand prisoners received death sentences, thousands escaped, while the rest, including the leading mutineers, were deported to labor camps. **Figure 25** During this period the Bolsheviks had managed to suppress the insurrection in East Karelia and reclaim the area for Russia. Complaints about the Treaty of Tartu, 1920, which had confirmed the Finnish-Soviet border, instigated forest partisan detachments and Finnish volunteers, indicated as black figures fringed in yellow, to push Red forces back to the Murmansk Railway, in the process seizing villages and killing local communists. Their assault is indicated by the green circle preceded by a dashed green arrow. Having taken the town of Uhtua, they promptly restored the East Karelian Government and renamed the region White Karelia, more or less that area set off by the dash-dot red line running from to the Barents Sea to Lake Ladoga. The movement was short-lived, and by early February, the region was again in Soviet hands, and Finland had to accept a frontier agreement establishing occupation zones.



## Conventional Symbols



1. *Rebel forts, batteries and battleships of Kronstadt.*
2. *Direction of attack March 7-8.*
3. *Position on March 15.*
4. *Position after regroupings on the evening of March 16.*
5. *Starting position for the attack and direction of attack on March 17.*

## Northeast Sector

Events in the map's northeast sector are limited to anti-Bolshevik activity in western Siberia, where their support quickly eroded during the period 1920-21. The Moscow Bolsheviks viewed Siberia as a breadbasket for the industrial workers of central Russia. Peasant uprisings against collective farm labor and requisition detachments began in the spring of 1920, followed by peasant insurgencies in the fall and winter of 1921. Their efforts were aided by sailors' uprising on Kronstadt, which partly overlapped events in Siberia.

The largest rebellion occurred in February-April 1921 in the province of Tobolsk and in parts of neighboring provinces. The rebels, consisting of bands of peasants, including former members of Kolchak's army, Red Army defectors, Socialist-Revolutionaries, and local landholders, appear as the five yellow figures, three on horseback, enveloped in dust clouds. They stormed and briefly occupied the cities of Petropavlovsk and Tobolsk. Having abolished Communist authority in Tobolsk, the rebels established a peasant soviet and mobilized a People's Army that eventually numbered some tens of thousands of peasants. Similar procedures were followed in neighboring *volosti*. Bands of peasants also occupied stretches of the Trans-Siberian railway for almost three weeks in February and early March; as a result grain, destined for central Russia was either destroyed or redistributed to locals.

In late March the Bolsheviks began to regain control of the region by applying the Red Terror, in which the Cheka burned villages, took hostages, deported families, and executed villagers indiscriminately. The symbols of the Red Cheka forces, three red soldiers, and lines of attack, are seen pursuing out of the area some of the popular local leaders, in yellow on horseback, including Semenov, Baraskin, Bardukov, and Gnoev.

The train running between Novonikolaevsk (Novosibirsk) and Omsk, with the inscription ХЛЕБ для голодающего центра, or "BREAD for the starving center," represents the attempted delivery of foodstuffs and grain from Altai, Yenisei, and Irkutsk provinces towards central Russia. The map presents it as a sign of Bolshevik beneficence, as well as success in restoring the railway line, rather than what it really was: a continuation of the policy of confiscation of valuable foodstuffs by military detachments, which incited the uprising in western Siberia.

A variety of symbols related to events dominates the southwest sector, specifically in the vicinity of the Polish-Soviet border, which we take to include Warsaw, the Baltics, Belarus, and west Ukraine. The ensemble comprises a red flag with the emblem of a white eagle flying over Warsaw, which represents the newly established Polish Republic; a ring of three concentric circles, one yellow and two black; a flash with a yellow

background; five lines, or arrows of advance, leading from Warsaw to figures on horseback; seven black figure on horseback, against yellow backgrounds, following arrows of attack between the Russo-Polish border and the Dnieper; five small yellow circles with black borders; and dash-dot red line stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the mouth of the Dniester River.

This ensemble may represent the Soviet obsession with terrorist-turned-patriot, Boris Savinkov, who is known to have acted on behalf of Poland during the Polish-Soviet War, 1919-20. Savinkov called on Russian anti-Bolsheviks to form an alliance with Poland and other border states to thwart communist gains; to that end, he was suspected of fomenting rebellion among the peasants of western Russia during the war and following its conclusion. He also worked with Poland's new president, Joseph Piłsudski, to define the future Russo-Polish border before negotiations began for the Treaty of Riga, 1921, which ended the war.

Piłsudski, eager to come to terms with the defeated Russians, accepted the armistice boundary line (the dash-dot red line between the Gulf of Finland to the mouth of the Dniester), which was devised in October 1920 during peace preliminaries at Riga. Savinkov's position thus was undermined, and the Soviets obtained his expulsion from Poland after the signing of the Treaty of Riga on March 18, 1921. Before returning to Paris he resurrected his *People's Union for the Defense of the Motherland and Freedom*, which was designed to coordinate popular revolts among the peasantry. Several hundred of Savinkov's agents operated in the western provinces, disseminating propaganda among the peasants, while partisan units in the forests of the Russo-Polish border engaged in raids deep into Soviet territory, ambushing Red Army patrols, disrupting rail communications, and killing Bolsheviks. The figures of the black horseman fringed in yellow denote Savinkov's detachments and identify the names of some its leaders, such as Pavlov, Zhukov, Proskurov, and Tiutiunnyk (Petliura's liaison with Savinkov's *Union*). The five yellow circles ringed by black represent the locations of some of his cells operating west of the Dnieper. Savinkov was arrested by the Cheka at the Russo-Polish border and was given a show trial and executed sometime in 1924-25.



## Conventional Symbols

1. Soviet border.
2. Bourgeoisie states.
3. Railways.

### ***Karelian adventure (from 23 October 1921 to 17 February 1922***

4. Belokarelian and Russian counterrevolutionaries and the direction of their attack.
5. Red forces.
6. Red forces and direction of attack.
7. Headquarters.

### ***Gangs on the inside of the western border of the country***

8. Gang on the way to the Riga Treaty, 18 March 1921.
9. Gang after the Riga Treaty.
10. Kulak-Socialist Revolutionary bandits.
11. Makhno.
12. Red forces.
13. Savinkov (former SR) assassin gang hired by the Entente.

